

USARPAC KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

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Introduction

The abundance of knowledge-management (KM) tools coming onto the market provide structure and knowledge repositories for identifying, organizing, and disseminating information. However, KM is not only about the tools. In fact, individuals who rely solely on the tools may not be successful in implementing KM. Furthermore, KM tools frequently require a substantial upfront investment as well as costly and recurring maintenance. Not only is there more to knowledge management than just the tools, but there are also less costly ways to implement an effective KM Program.

HQ, U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC) implemented a highly effective KM program that is transforming USARPAC into a knowledge-based organization at minimal cost. Our strategy emphasizes business process and tool reuse, which increases effectiveness by using what is familiar, and contributes to minimizing cost by reducing the need for new tools and training.

One KM challenge facing USARPAC is the organization's dispersed nature, which today spans 16 time zones and consists of Active and Reserve Army forces in Japan, Hawaii, and Alaska, and Reserve forces in Washington, Guam, and American Samoa. Therefore, while our current KM effort is focused at USARPAC, it is designed to enable knowledge sharing with major subordinate commands (MSCs) and Army KM and other Service components.

USARPAC Approach

KM is a critical enabler as we undergo the Army transformation. USARPAC defined the return on investment for KM as improved product quality and workplace morale. Our goal

is to "empower the USARPAC workforce to actively leverage our Intellectual Capital as a critical enabler for Army Transformation and Joint Vision 2020, and to become an effective Knowledge-based organization."

Recognizing that KM is overwhelmingly more about people and processes than about technology, we have focused our program on business processes, particularly those that support our core priority missions. We contracted with the U.S. Army Information Systems Engineering Command (USAISEC) KM group to facilitate a series of focused meetings, or charrettes. To achieve KM buy-in, we included staff members from all levels and functional areas in defining the top program priorities and solicited input from senior leaders, subject matter experts, action officers, information officers, system administrators, and administrative personnel. The charrettes gathered input on the current and desired state of knowledge sharing in USARPAC by posing questions on knowledge culture, sources, accessibility, and responsibility, as well as tools, policies, business practices, and issues. Participants were invited to define how to transition to a learning organization. Through discussion and consolidation, we identified seven top priorities that included issues that both apply to the KM Program and that will effectively complement and augment our KM initiative.

USARPAC KM Implementation

USARPAC's KM implementation is an ongoing process that includes incorporating knowledge management into new and existing programs, modifying business practices to improve efficiency and increase process reuse, and deploying additional tools to support business practices. A significant

key to our success is the strong support from our senior leaders.

To incorporate KM into the organization structure, USAISEC analyzed the network information infrastructure to ensure that it would support the required information flow and ensure that planned upgrades would continue to support KM implementation. The analysis addressed the local infrastructure and wide area networks. This effort included the Common User Installation Transport Network upgrades to ensure that our architecture was optimized to support the KM implementation and information flow. The analysis took a total systems approach, including the DOD Information Technology Security Certification and Accreditation Process, training, and user support.

The charrettes helped USARPAC knowledge workers identify those practices and processes with the most impact on our core priority missions. Key processes included resource management, strategic planning, suspense tracking, and training. A review of these key processes revealed redundancies, inefficiencies, and opportunities for process reuse. Many of the processes were streamlined and improved by using automation and by turning tacit knowledge into guidelines and checklists for routine and repetitive tasks.

After evaluating the business process requirements and achieving widespread buy-in, we identified KM tools suited to our needs. Some of our tool selection criteria include low cost, user friendliness, portability, and reusability. Because workflow processes are a large part of KM improvements, the Workflow Management System (WMS) tool, based on Microsoft Outlook, was selected to meet our requirements. In fact, the Office 2000 suite, which minimizes our acquisition costs and training requirements, is already our standard. To implement and customize individual views of the USARPAC portal, we selected Microsoft Digital Dashboard 2 portal framework, in compliance with the Defense Collaborative Tool Suite.

USARPAC KM is an evolving process that can be modified based on changing roles and missions. Our Information Management (IM) Panel is also evolving to support KM imple-

mentation, advancement, and continued buy-in. Several best practices approaches, including the IM Panel, are discussed below.

Best Practices

Program Integration. KM impacts all aspects of our organization; therefore, we incorporate KM into any new or upgraded system. The previously mentioned example is the infrastructure analysis, where the upgrade was evaluated with KM requirements in mind. Another example is the USARPAC command and control functional matrix, which provides information on the level of interaction that must be supported between command elements.

The IM Panel. The IM Panel was previously chartered to support the *Clinger-Cohen Act* objectives for managing the information technology acquisition process, and for establishing goals and performance measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations. USARPAC staff principals are represented on the IM Panel and raise, review, and discuss IM issues to disseminate information on initiatives and to solicit ideas from their respective staffs. Their activities support the top program priorities identified during the charrettes. The IM Panel adopted the KM goal to transform USARPAC to a knowledge-based organization.

A significant IM Panel objective is to transition the USARPAC into a knowledge-management organization. This cultural impact is often overlooked when implementing KM because of the tendency to focus on new technologies. Because few use these technologies, this can easily lead to a KM Program failure. By communicating and representing their functional area staff, panel members maintain interest and participation in the KM Program, promote process ownership, and maintain buy-in across the organization.

The IM Panel reviewed issues identified in the KM charrettes and addressed them. After assessing the ineffective use of e-mail ("pushing" information such as blood drives and social events that are more appropriately "pulled") and the forwarding of large and unnecessary files, the IM Panel disseminated guidelines for e-mail users. Another issue they considered is the Army Knowledge Man-

agement Strategic Plan objective to incorporate KM into individual performance plans. The panel tackled problems such as measuring the effectiveness of KM practices. In the process, the IM Panel determined that a modification to individual job descriptions is not needed to add KM to individual performance plans.

A third example demonstrates cultural impact. The USARPAC senior leader proposed sharing and viewing calendar information. When the IM Panel members polled their staffs, they discovered that people were unwilling to share detailed calendar information. The panel modified the proposed objective to allow only individual availability information to be shared. Thus, headquarters buy-in became possible, and the KM objective was met.

Assessed Environment. The KM effort focuses on USARPAC. However, we recognize that for KM to be effective, knowledge sharing must occur outside the organization as well as within. Our assessed environment included higher headquarters and joint commands including the Department of the Army, U.S. Pacific Command, Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Pacific Air Forces. We incorporated plans for interoperability and also came away with implementation ideas such as reuse of the Digital Dashboard portal frameworks, Digital Dashboard library, conference room scheduling software, and Workflow Management System.

Internally, the assessed environment reflects the fact that different functions have different knowledge needs. The charrettes were organized to ensure that KM requirements were gathered from individual knowledge workers across all functional areas of the organization. The IM Panel ensures that those knowledge workers continue to be involved in KM's evolution.

Modeling. We selected four of the key business processes identified during the charrettes and developed models of the existing processes, as well as proposed target processes. This enabled us to develop metrics and determine whether changing the target processes would produce the anticipated return on investment, develop and validate requirements for appropriate KM tools, and support *Clinger-Cohen Act* objectives.

Future Prospects

USARPAC encourages our MSCs to use the KM modules by ensuring that our program continues to evolve with interoperability as a critical objective. Interoperability is facilitated by selecting standards-based technologies. XML (eXtensible Markup Language) is one software technology that shows promise as a means to seamlessly exchange information between different applications and databases. USARPAC envisions that files and objects such as Digital Dashboard modules will be ported between external communities of interest using this technology.

We will continue to foster the success of our KM Program, evolving our KM strategy and objectives to meet our Army transformation requirements. Our long-term goals focus on extending effective knowledge sharing with the joint community and maintaining awareness of the KM Programs, both within and outside the command. As our KM Program, organizational culture, and technologies mature, we will continue to remain on point in the Pacific.

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